FACT SHEET
Understanding Forest Land Use Zones

What is a Forest Land Use Zone?

A Forest Land Use Zone (FLUZ) is established through legislation used to regulate intensive recreational use and can be used to help resolve conflicting recreational and land use issues. The Minister of Environment designates FLUZ under the authority of the *Forests Act.*

The Coal Branch Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) provides broad land use direction for the Coal Branch area along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains near Hinton. Within the IRP, areas can be zoned for Prime Protection (to preserve sensitive terrain and areas which contain important ecological and aesthetic resources) or Critical Wildlife (to protect specific wildlife or fish populations and habitats) depending on the sensitivity of an area.

The FLUZs in this area provide a formal mechanism to regulate access and add greater protection to sensitive areas and key wildlife habitat.

There are various levels of access control that can be achieved through the Forest Land Use Zone designation including the following:

- Complete exclusion of motorized and/or non-motorized activities, including recreational camping;
- Restriction of motorized activities to designated trails or travel corridors;
- Exclusion of motorized and non-motorized activities from certain highly sensitive areas within a zone;
- Seasonal restrictions of motorized and/or non-motorized activities during certain times of the year.

Coal Branch FLUZ, Athabasca FLUZ & the Brule Lake FLUZ:

Three separate FLUZs, within the Coal Branch IRP area, were designated in May 1999, to manage access and provide management guidelines for activities occurring in this area.

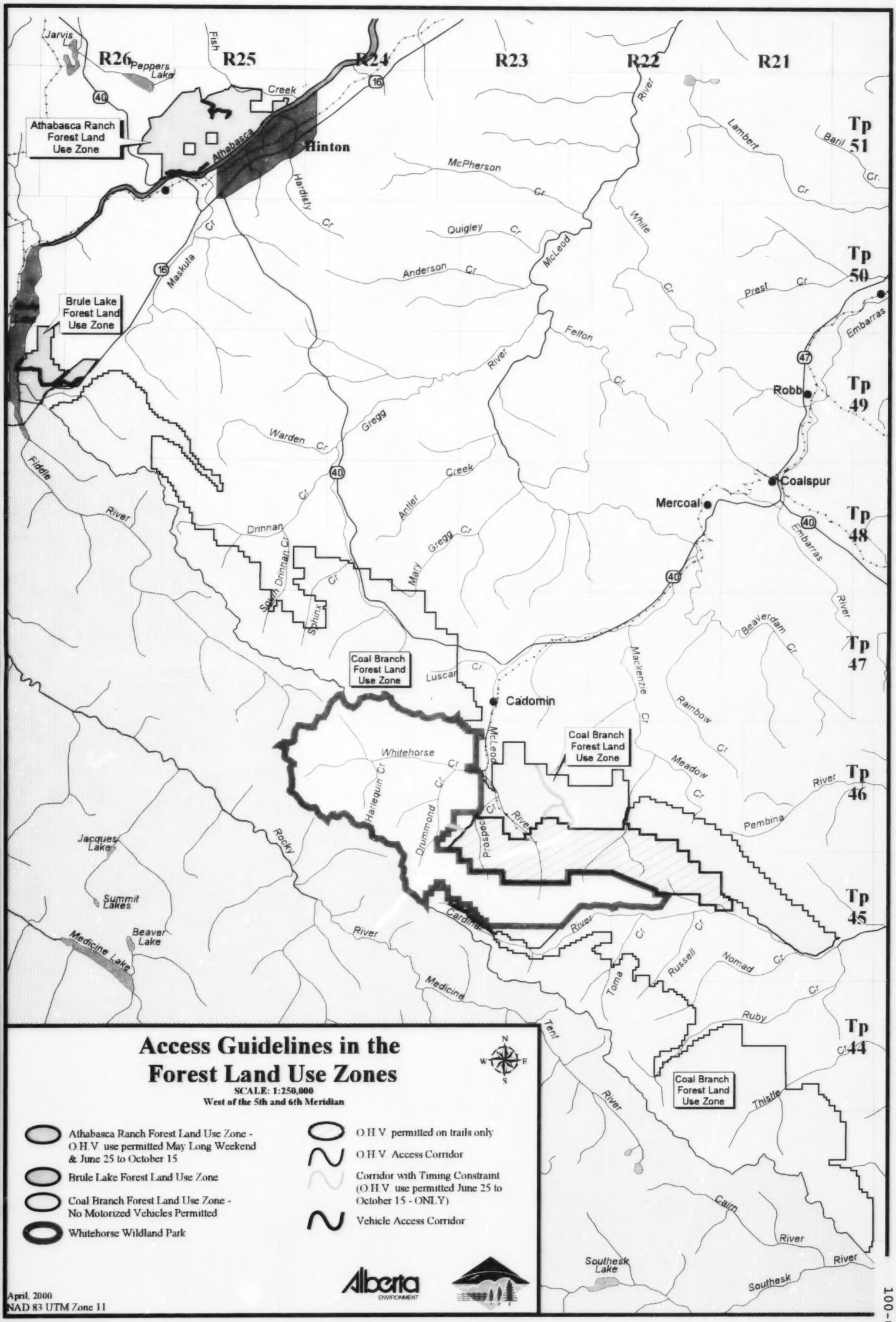
This legislation regulates recreational off-highway vehicle access, which provides a buffer for protected lands and important natural resources. In addition, the FLUZs will provide continued opportunities for most traditional recreational use.

Designated off-highway vehicle trails have been identified through the Coal Branch Access Management Plan (1994) and approved access in these areas will be indicated by signage. The attached map highlights designated access, and identifies the boundaries of the following three FLUZs.

- **Coal Branch FLUZ** will regulate motorized vehicle use which will minimize environmental impacts on sensitive areas, assist in wildlife management and habitat protection, properly manage reclaimed mine lands after a reclamation certificate has been issued, and minimize conflicts between different recreational user groups.

  There are designated trails and timing restrictions to allow motorized use in designated areas. Refer to the attached map for specific information on designated trails and access.

More on Forest Land Use Zones.....



Access Guidelines in the Forest Land Use Zones

SCALE: 1:250,000
West of the 5th and 6th Meridian

- Athabasca Ranch Forest Land Use Zone - O.H.V. use permitted May Long Weekend & June 25 to October 15
- Brule Lake Forest Land Use Zone
- Coal Branch Forest Land Use Zone - No Motorized Vehicles Permitted
- Whitehorse Wildland Park

- O.H.V. permitted on trails only
- O.H.V. Access Corridor
- Corridor with Timing Constraint (O.H.V. use permitted June 25 to October 15 - ONLY)
- Vehicle Access Corridor

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More on Forest Land Use Zones.....

- **Athabasca Ranch FLUZ** allows seasonal off-highway vehicle access to the area during the May long-weekend and from June 25th to the end of the Labour Day weekend. These timing restrictions are in effect to minimize conflicts with elk.

  A designated access route is established along the industrial road, providing year-round access into the centre of the area. Year-round motorized access is permitted to the random camping site in the river valley and to the east leg of the access management area, immediately east of the Athabasca Ranch (private land).

- **Brule Lake FLUZ** is in a Zone 2 Critical Wildlife Area where motorized recreation use is restricted. The objective of this zone is to maintain or increase the elk population and reduce conflicts between recreational users and elk by allowing motorized access on designated trails only.

  An off-highway vehicle recreation access corridor is provided through this zone, allowing access from the Overlander Lodge to the Brule Lake, non-vegetated sand dunes area.

Common Questions Regarding Forest Land Use Zones

1. *What activities are still allowed in the zones where motorized vehicle use is prohibited?*

   Hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, canoeing, cross-country skiing and horseback riding are all permitted within the FLUZ.

2. *Where is motorized vehicle access permitted within the FLUZ?*

   Motorized vehicle access is permitted on designated trails only. Designated trails are authorized by approved signage. See attached map for more details.

3. *What is the purpose of timing restrictions for access, in certain areas?*

   Timing restrictions are imposed in certain areas to satisfy wildlife management concerns and assist in habitat protection. For example, seasonal motorized access helps to minimize disturbance to elk as well as protect key winter habitat. The objective is to help sustain or improve the elk population and reduce conflict between elk and recreational users.

4. *Are campfires permitted within the FLUZs?*

   Yes, campfires are permitted within the FLUZ areas, except during an official fire ban. Please use only dead wood and always ensure your fire is completely extinguished before leaving the area. When camping above treeline, fires fueled with native wood are discouraged. Use of small burner stoves is recommended.

For more information on Forest Land Use Zones, contact the Land and Forest Service in Edson (780-723-8265) or in Hinton (780-865-8267). To call toll-free, dial 310-0000 and then enter the number.

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